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Lovest Thou Me?

(John 21:17.)

(Translated from the West German truth paper—"Christliche Warte.")

THE question of our Lord's—"Lovest thou me?" comes to His people from the Gospel of John like an urgent, reminding call. It is weighty and important, and blessed is the man who aims to make this call a guide to all his - actions. Woe unto them who are of the opinion that they may attach little importance to this deep meaning question; there is great danger therein that may cause the careless to stumble, and under some circumstances the promised crown may even be lost. We must lend wings to our spirit and soar upward to find true, precious, everlasting love in wonderful harmonizing perfection. Since unprovable ages we find embodied in the majestic personality of Jehovah, our Heavenly Father, the holy, original principle of all-embracing love for the world.

This boundless love is one of the costliest blooms which adorn all the beautiful characteristics of our Almighty God, the lovely fragrance of which lends a beautiful odour to His entire workmanship. All His works are crowned with love. We may look about in all directions—down to the diminutive beetle which, full of the joy of life and bathed in golden sunshine, moves up and down the waving stalk of grass; or up to the firmament at night, where numberless heavenly bodies travel their everlasting way in silent majesty, and there we see the starry hosts in their sparkling beauty; or at the restless, rolling waves of the ocean; the white, shining glaciers of the mountain ranges; the solemn, rustling forests; the flaming red of the sunset; or at the enrapturing colours and forms of the flowers of summer. Everywhere in these beautiful things we seem to perceive the undying voice of the Creator—"Lovest thou me, Oh heart of man?"

Men should be thankful, endlessly thankful, for God's providence, for His faithfulness, for His world-wide love; they should open their hearts to this warm, living stream of love, and let it fully enter into themselves; and yet, how far are they still away? Selfishness rules more to-day than ever before — very little can be noticed of love towards God or neighbourly love. At the present time, gross egoism and cold lovelessness have become so established as to cause us to fear the worst, and which is also confirmed in the Scriptures. That the fall of mankind is a hopeless one is becoming increasingly clear, so far as regaining, in their own strength, that which was lost.

A master of love is required to awaken the stony hearts of fallen men, to change them to fleshly hearts with the balsam of that godlike love which can conquer the most stubborn opposition. In the coming age,

long centuries will be at our Redeemer's disposal to accomplish this world-wide work. All men will be brought back to a state of perfection in love, and in all eyes will the wonderful words be lit up—"Lovest thou me?" Glorious time!

When these deep-meaning words are held in remembrance at every step and stride of humbled men, selfishness will be conquered; truly, if the distracted world is to be recovered, complete self-denial will be necessary. This way will mean following Jesus, and slowly but surely adopting the noble characteristics and costly virtues which our dear Master possessed so richly at the time of His human perfection.

The essence of God is love in its most glorious and perfect state. Besides His exalted wisdom, it was God's boundless love which moved Him to create all His wonderful beings; and this love rules and embraces the universe and finds ways of reaching man when he is in despair. We have the most positive proof of God's boundless love in that He gave His dear Son, His most precious possession, in order to pay the ransom price for the lost and fallen human race. We now understand the important words of the Psalmist, in Psa. 77:13— "God, thy way is holy." (Luther's translation.)

As we all know, "holy" means "selected for a purpose," and this is also true of the way which the Lord's wisdom chose for His Son in the flesh—that He became the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. (John 1:29.) We note the wonderful wisdom of God, whereby He harmonized His unbending righteousness with His world-wide love. No human brain would have discovered this way of God, which is so unendingly exalted, and yet so very plain.

The attitude of our Saviour towards the burning question of mankind's redemption is no less marvellous. As God made known His purpose to His dear Son, that in all things He might have the pre-eminence (Col. 1:18), Jesus was, in love, fully prepared to do the will of the Father. "I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart," (Psa. 40:8), was His answer to the Father's question, "Lovest thou me?"

We have a pattern in our Lord's unconditional surrender, in His willingness to sacrifice, in His great love. The spotless, Holy One gladly left the blissful, heavenly surroundings to become despised, rejected and persecuted, in fulfilling His mission in this world which was hostile toward Him, He fulfilled the written law and the will of the Father so conscientiously and faithfully that He will be recognised as the luminous morning star into the remotest ages, and will let His saving light shine, not only in this world, but throughout the entire universe.

Many of our Lord's precious teachings were laid down in the New Testament by His disciples who had the privilege to walk in closest companionship with Him. Our beloved Master was the greatest teacher the world has ever seen. His godly teachings, which breathe the spirit of righteousness and unbounded neighbourly love, will, when, they become operative in the Millennium, renew the world and humanity. They accomplish the washing of regeneration (Tit. 3:5), in which the sins, faults and weaknesses of mankind will ultimately come to naught, in order that the holy principle of true love may shine forth for all time.

As the Lord at that time spoke to His disciples, He still speaks to you, to me; and to all whom He will still call, He will also speak—"Lovest thou me? then follow me." His kind soul-searching eyes are turned toward us, full of love and goodness; who could withstand Him? "Thou hast the words of eternal life." (John 6:68.) For His called and chosen class, His own people, the little flock, which He drew out of the darkness of sin into His wonderful light of truth, Jesus left a number of teachings and guiding principles which, if followed, will bring us ever nearer the heart of the Father.

Besides all other virtues the principle of love in every form naturally takes first place in our character

development.

It is a precious way, this pathway of love, this following in the footsteps which our dear Master left for us. He who earnestly strives to follow will not only receive much quiet joy and rich blessing now, but to him it will be more clearly revealed that “love is the fulfilling of the law.” (Rom. 13:10.) “And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.” (1 Cor. 13:13.) Love for God and His everlasting truth; love for our Lord, for the brethren, for our neighbour, for our enemies; this is the sum of God’s law which we must obey as much as possible, if we wish to stand before the Master when He asks us, “Lovest thou me?”

It is sometimes very difficult to conquer the opposing desires of our own selves, the world, and Satan’s wily influences. At the same time the Scriptures give us a sure answer for any and every difficulty— “Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read; no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate.” (Isa. 34:16.) As regards our attitude towards the world, we find the instructions in 1 John 2:15 and 1 John 4:16— “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him,” and “He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.” It is so very important for the consecrated followers of Jesus to walk strictly in the way set forth by the Lord, as then they are in the least danger of stumbling. “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.” (John 14:21.) Added thereto, a constant searching of the precious depths of God’s Word is necessary, because only thereby are we able to withstand Satan’s methods of deception in the present “evil day.”

Again we hear the Lord speak, “Lovest thou me?” if so, then “Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.” These are very important words, and may we always keep them in mind. In following Jesus there is so very much of which to take heed, and many lessons to be learned in humility, in loyalty, and in faith.

In order to gain brotherly love—that beautiful virtue of character—often much tact is required, much fineness of feeling, and the spirit of the Lord exhorts us to practise forgiveness, instead of desiring to judge hastily in a false heart condition; and herein we all fail without exception. Our Lord certainly recognised the great importance of this point in the character development of His followers. He knew that our brotherly love could be strained and ensnared in a web of self-assurance, which in many cases would make clear discernment difficult. However, our brotherly love must be proven and tested, and by such the new creature demonstrates how much has been learned in the school of Christ. Even when, in our opinion, we are absolutely in the right, we could be especially tested respecting our readiness “to lay down our lives for the brethren.” (1 John 3:16.) In such moments the question may well arise in the heart of a brother or sister—“Lovest thou me?”

While our Master desires to preserve us from unnecessary conflicts, He impressed upon His disciples, and us also, such loving, thoughtful words — “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” The Lord’s words remind us, as those of the truest friend we ever had, “Lovest thou me?” then, “follow me”;—this is the way, walk ye in it. Our Master calls to us continually live according to my maxims and commandments, which are dictated by love.

It is so very necessary that we practise wholeheartedly brotherly love in this time of testing, while divisions and factions are permitted to thoroughly sift us, in order to reveal the fully consecrated ones. We wish to quote an example from life, in order to emphasize the danger of many testings, and that all hasty judging may be far from us, and that we become constantly more cautious. There was a certain beloved, old, grey-haired brother whose calling took him on many journeys to foreign lands in tropical climates, so that he was often absent from home for years. Recently, he went on his last great journey; namely, to the

other side of Jordan. Although his rugged profession naturally made a strong impression on him outwardly, he possessed some noble qualities within. His whole life was a continuous chain of difficulty, misery and mistakes; yet this little one of the Lord's proclaimed, with wonderful faithfulness, the love of the Master to those, with whom he came in contact. He had a firmly fixed faith of being a child of the Father, and his unshakeable love for his Lord Jesus was really touching; and yet, this beloved brother had an imperfection, an evil habit, which he could not leave because he inherited it from his father, as he often expressed with bitter tears—he drank, not always, but periodically—and he fought very hard against this evil. However, this matter was sufficient for another certain brother to refuse to recognise him as a brother, to avoid him, and no longer to have fellowship with him. The old brother was laid on a sick bed, from which he was never to rise again.

Another brother came who looked at the situation from a different angle. He decided within himself that love must be supreme, as long as there was still living faith in the ransom price; and besides, it is not for a man to judge another. He supported the old brother, and comforted him with the consolation which we all have had, and went to visit him until shortly before his death, and both were richly blessed. As he was with him for the last time and took his thin hand in his, a look of joy entered the eyes of the old man, and he whispered words which fill the heart with joy and can never be forgotten—"You are the only one that still comes to see me." He had several times pleaded with the other brother who avoided him, and if he would have been present, he could have read in the tired eyes of the dying one, the silent question—"Lovest thou me?"

Yes, dear brethren, there was a very important lesson to learn in this matter. Blessed is the person that learns it thoroughly, and stands the test connected with it. May we never adopt any self-considered theory of brotherly love, because all human theory is darkening and misleading like a thick fog. What is so very necessary is the practical, unconditional, active living of precious love which will not be prevented from showing its wonderful strength by any weakness in a brother or sister.

Does not this cause us to think deeply? And now "Lovest thou me?" Then not only take up your cross, but deny yourself; lay your life down for the brethren, and follow in the Master's footsteps. "And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it." (Isa. 30 :2 1.) You know the way; I know the way; why do we hesitate? Let us go, for the way of Jesus is also our way. Who, while hearing this little story would not have brought to mind the fitting verses of Scripture in Luke 6:36, 37, 41, 42. "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged; condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned; forgive, and ye shall be forgiven. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye." "Lovest thou me?"

Now, another example taken from reality, in which we can so clearly see how easily we are inclined to set up conditions in the practise of brotherly love, and to judge, and how the Lord permits these things for our testing. Two brethren in the Lord met on the way, and their conversation turned to a debated question which to the one seemed very important, but the other could not consider it so. So important did the first brother consider this question, that in his opinion all that would not understand it as he did were in danger of judgment. At the end of the conversation this brother said, "We could love you much more if you could come to the same understanding as regards this important point as we have." This is about as much as saying, Up till now we love you 90 per cent., but if you had the same opinion as we have, we could love you 100 per cent. The fullest, whole-hearted love would then depend on the acceptance, or rejection, of various man-made theories and view points. Let each one judge for himself whether this is showing true, unselfish brotherly love.

Did the Lord, in John 21:17, say to Peter, whose weaknesses had become manifest, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me 90 per cent," or did He simply say—"Lovest thou me?" Then in verse 19 we have the Master's invitation—"Follow me." Yes, if we wish to practise this "following" in all particulars, it becomes difficult indeed. We still fail so very much; and always, only because we do not sufficiently heed the guidance of the Lord—Let all things be done in love.

Let us call to mind the words of the Apostle Paul—"But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment; yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified; but he that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore, judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall every man have praise of God" (1 Cor. 4:3-5.) The leaving of things to the Lord is the lesson we must learn; nothing more and nothing less.

The imperfections of His disciples caused even our beloved Lord to utter those well known words in Matt. 17:17 and Luke 9:41—"How long shall I suffer you?" Quite apart from their lack of faith mentioned here, the perfect, delicate, tender feelings of Jesus must often have suffered painfully, as He observed the weaknesses of His first twelve followers. But just herein He demonstrated, as a far-reaching example, an all-embracing and atoning love. Our Master bore their weaknesses in love: therefore, let us do likewise. We must bear with each other reciprocally, in spite of our great variety of characteristics. "Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy; for by faith ye stand." (2 Cor. 1:24.)

A beautiful thought by the well-known poet Klopstock reads—"Seed sown by God, to ripen for the harvest day." God has also sown His seed in our one-time obstinate heart, when He permitted us to see the wonderful depths of His elevated wisdom. He has sown seed, whereby love, that indefinable power which permeates the entire universe like a refreshing breath of life, must come to the fore. Love originates from God. If, in the day of harvest, when the Master gathers the wheat into His barn, the God - sown seed is to be thoroughly ripe, love in every form must become sufficiently developed in the New Creation.

The alabaster box must be broken now, and its precious contents be spread over the brother and the sister, as in Israel the high priest, Aaron, was so richly anointed with the holy ointment that it flowed over the whole body, right down to the feet. Lovest thou thy brother? Then break your alabaster box of love; the best is just good enough for him. We must lay down our lives for the brethren; therefore, do not hesitate to break it. Our Lord permitted Himself to be broken for the wellbeing of the entire sin-sick humanity. And now, prove yourself—"Lovest thou me?" Do you wholeheartedly love your brother and your sister? If so, then forget entirely and unconditionally that which is past. Stretch out both hands; let your eye shine with pure, rich love, because the heart shines forth from eye. Sweep the last of the leaven out of the hidden depths of your heart, out of the depth of your mind, and say, without hesitating, joyfully say, "I love Thee." Then will you be acceptable to your Lord and Master, and the countenance of the Father will smile kindly upon you. O, let us learn more and more to keep ourselves in the right heart condition, and to gain the hearts Of opposing brethren with the wonderful, deep question—"Lovest thou me?" Let us Jive according to the meaning contained in His own words—"Then follow me." This is the way, the way to life. Forget not, that we find ourselves on the highway to our Heavenly Home.

Melbourne Christmas Convention.

The Melbourne brethren wish to announce that their Annual Convention will be held again this year (D.V.) over the Christmas season, for the four days December 25th to 28th, with additional gatherings on January 1st and 2nd. These assemblies will be held in the Masonic Hall, 254 Swan Street, Richmond, and a cordial invitation is extended to all friends able to attend these gatherings in the Lord's name. A helpful season of refreshing is confidently anticipated, by the Lord's grace. Further information is obtainable from the secretary, Mr. J. B. Hiam, C/o Berean Bible Institute, Kew, E.4, Victoria.

When we are judged, we are chastened' of the Lord.
1 Cor. 11:32.

When on entering a house I see a child in disgrace for disobedience, although I tenderly consider the erring child, I especially feel with the grieved, sorrowing parent. When we sin, and are chastened of God, we should rather consider how the heart of our heavenly Father has by us been grieved, than be taken up with the smart of our stripes by His rod of correction. R. C. Chapman.

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While it is our intention that these column be used for teachings strictly in accord with the Lord's Word, we cannot accept responsibility for every expression used, either in the correspondence or in the sermons reported.

A Cross (x) on the wrapper indicates that the Subscription to "Peoples Paper" is overdue,

Let Not the Sun Go Down.

“Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.”-Eph. 4:26.

IN his epistles to the various churches the Apostle Paul was careful to include instructions to cover all manner of shortcomings likely to affect every member of the assemblies to whom he ministered. The Apostle seemed to have a complete understanding of the deceptions of the adversary, and sought to warn, exhort and encourage the followers, of the Lord not to be deceived by the wrong influences of the evil one. As we have the same great opposer in our midst to-day, it is not surprising to find that the same difficulties encountered by the saints in Paul's day are also now present amongst the Lord's people.

One of the most encouraging features of the Apostle's instructions to the churches is the recognition of shortcomings in a way that gives hope to those who know and feel their weaknesses and are ever striving to overcome in the Christian way. For instance, in our text in Eph. 4:26, Paul does not say that a true follower of the Master would never give way to wrathful feelings, wrathful words, or wrathful actions; he admits the possibility of some being overtaken in these faults, and then seeks to present the remedy for the correction and overcoming of these difficulties by all who are truly teachable in the school of Christ.

This same helpful approach to the subject of shortcomings was presented by the writer of Proverbs, in chapter 24:16—“A just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again.” The main point in this text is that the just or honest one that falls is not discouraged, to become weak-hearted and give up trying. No, the “rising up again” shows that the shortcoming that produced the fall is dealt with in accordance with the Lord's instructions, and can be overcome. While, then, there may be numerous falls, recovery is attained on each occasion by the just or true-hearted of God's people, and so strength is gained for final victory, by the Lord's grace and strength.

So the Apostle in our text seeks to encourage the brethren who may be overtaken with a feeling of wrath, or who have spoken or acted unbecomingly in any manner, that recovery is possible and should be sought without delay— “Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.” This clearly implies that the sins or shortcomings of each day should be corrected before a new day begins, and the way to gain recovery is, of course, to seek forgiveness before the Lord in prayer. Failure to seek forgiveness for “wrath” in feelings, words or acts would be most detrimental; hence, the Apostle's exhortation to get right with the Lord while each day is with us, for “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9.)

Further, if any of the Lord's people feel that they have been wronged by another, there are also very clear and definite instructions in God's Word as to how to act in such circumstances, in harmony with the words of our text— “Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.” In Matt. 18:15 we have our Lord's words—“If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother,”

It is at once apparent that the “gaining” of the brother or sister who has supposedly trespassed against another member in the Lord's family is of greatest importance; therefore, the “telling him of his fault” must be done kindly, in view of possible misunderstandings, and also in private—“between thee and him alone”—without any previous conversation or gossip with others respecting the supposed trespass. Thus, with love in the heart and a desire to gain a brother or sister to restored harmony and unity of the spirit, the Lord's help also being invoked in prayers, the outcome in most cases would surely be productive of lasting good, in the strengthening of the ties of brotherly love in the Lord's family, to His praise.

On the other hand, if the Lord's instructions are ignored or overlooked, and the real or supposed trespasses are held against another over days, weeks or months, a very sad condition of heart would be the

outcome, for the spirit of the adversary could quite easily take control, which would result in “grieving the holy spirit of God, whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption.” No wonder, then, the Apostle continues—”Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.” (Eph. 4:30-32.)

How important it is, then, that the hearts of God’s people be kept pure and tender, kindly affectioned one toward another, and indeed toward all men, that in their minds, intentions and ambitions they may become copies of God’s dear Son, our Lord and Redeemer. How quickly, then, should evil thoughts be put away, and kept away, so that the spirit and love of God may be shed abroad in our hearts by the holy spirit which is given unto us. As the Apostle Peter also declared --”Above all things have fervent love among yourselves; for love shall cover a multitude of defects.” (1 Pet. 4:8.)

Yes, indeed, love does not notice the unintentional shortcomings of others, for “love thinketh no evil.” Therefore, “let not the sun go down upon your wrath.”

Greeting Cards.

One of our brethren in the printing trade has kindly produced some Greeting Cards and sent them along with the request that the proceeds from the sale of them be donated to the General Tract Fund to assist in the work of the Institute. This is very much appreciated, in the service of the Lord.

Tracts Available.

The article—”Is There a Second Chance for Salvation After Death?”—has been appreciated by the brethren, and is now in tract form. Quite a number have been forwarded to various friends, and further supplies are available for all who can place them to advantage.

“The Divine Plan of the Ages”.—A new supply of this wonderful study on the Bible is on hand. Blue cloth binding, handy pocket size. Price 4/6, post paid.

“Do the Dead Know Anything”—The full and satisfactory answer to this question is given from the Bible in this 24 -page booklet. Price 5d. per copy; 6 copies for 2/-, posted.

“Christ’s Return”.—This 38-page booklet explains this subject in some detail, and is supplied at 10d. per copy, or three copies for 2/3, post paid.

The Christian's Joy.

“Thou wilt show me the path of life; in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore.”—Psa. 16:1•.

WHEN we consider how much is said in the Scriptures about joy and rejoicing among God's people, we are deeply impressed with the thought that our Heavenly Father is very solicitous for the happiness of His children even in the present life. The worldly minded cannot see this ; they look upon the lot of God's children as a hard and joyless one, and upon God as a hard Master, without concern for the happiness of His children. This, however, is only because the natural man cannot receive the things of the spirit of God, because they are spiritually discerned. But the spiritually minded have meat to eat of which the world knows nothing; and their hearts rejoice, and their joy no man taketh from them.

How strange it seems, says the world. Why, there was Paul a man of great talent and opportunity, who might have been somebody in the world; he wasted his talents, was a poor man all his days, homeless, friendless, knocked about and persecuted, a sort of religious fanatic. But Paul, viewing the matter from the standpoint of his spiritual discernment, said, “I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulations” (2 Cor. 7:4.) ; for he was one of that anointed body who, like his Lord and Head, could say, “I foresaw the Lord always before my face; for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved. Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad” (Acts 2:25, 26) .

So the Psalmist bids all the anointed body rejoice, saying, “Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous, for praise is comely for the upright” (Psa. 33:1) . And Isaiah, speaking for the same class, says, “I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God ; for he bath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he bath covered me with the robe of righteousness as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with jewels” (Isa. 61:10.)

This blessed joy which so wonderfully lifts the soul above all the vicissitudes of the present life is, as the prophet expresses it, joy in the Lord, not a joy in earthly possessions, or earthly hopes or ambitions. These earthly things are all so transitory and so changeable that a single blast of adversity may sweep them all from us; but not so is it with those whose hearts are centred in God, and to whom He has shown the path of life. These have learned to estimate the things of this present life according to their true values; they see that all of its joys are both transient and unsatisfactory, and that the only real value in it is in the opportunities it affords for experience and discipline and education in the things of God, and for hearing the call of God and making our calling and election sure. In .thus making the proper use of the present life—walking in the path of life which God shows us through His Word—we have the present joys and hope and faith in the things unseen, but sure and eternal, knowing also that by and by in the immediate presence of God we shall have fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore at His right hand—the chief place of favour.

But while the fulness of joy in its widest sense is reserved for that blessed time when we shall be like the Lord and see Him as He is (1 John 3:1, 2), and be in His presence and at His right hand (in His chief favour) , there is a fulness of joy in the presence and favour of God, which is the privilege of every Christian now. Our capacity for joy now is not what it will be by and by, but it is possible now to have our earthen vessels as full as they can hold of the joy of the Lord. And day by day it is our privilege to realise the presence and favour of God, if, by walking in the path of life, the path of obedience,- and loving service, we draw near to God. “If a man love me,” said our Lord Jesus, “he will keep my words, and my Father will' love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him” (John 14:23.).

In such company as this, can any Christian fail utterly to realise some measure of joy in the Lord? No, it'

his faith grasps the promise and holds it, the realisation of joy in the Lord is sure to follow, and the more firmly his faith lays hold upon the promise the more he will realise its fulfilment, and the more fully will his joys abound, for in the presence of the Lord is fulness of joy, no matter what may be the conditions and circumstances.

In the blessed realisation of this experience, and the assurance of faith which it gave, in the midst of all his labours, Paul exclaimed, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? . . . Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:33-39.)

It was this strong persuasion, this confident faith of the Apostle, that gave him such joy in the midst of all his tribulations. His faith laid hold upon the promises of God with a strong and steady grasp, and love and gratitude impelled him to prompt obedience to the will of God and ardent zeal in His service, and evidently the Lord's promise was fulfilled in the abiding presence of Father and Son with him at all times and under all circumstances.

This blessed privilege is ours also if by faith we enter fully into the Lord's will and favour. And with a blessed realisation of the abiding presence of our Heavenly Father, and our Lord Jesus at all times, and of their love and favour, and a faith that lays hold of all the exceeding great and precious promises of God, what soul may not rejoice and be glad, even in the midst of deep sorrow or great tribulation? In the Lord's presence, no matter where we are, is fulness of joy. Let us cultivate the Lord's acquaintance more, drawing near to Him in prayer, in the study of His precious Word, in meditation upon all His goodness, His providential care, the marked manifestation of His grace in our own individual experiences, and His precious promises which are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus. Thus "draw nigh to God. and he will draw nigh to you" (James 4:8) ; He will manifest Himself to you and take up His abode with you.

It is indeed the will of God that all His children should be happy in Him, that they should be always rejoicing; and if any one lacks this blessing he is living below his privileges. Let us appreciate the favour of God to the extent of seeking for it more and more diligently, remembering the exhortation, "Seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you." All the riches of Divine favour are ours if in faith and humility we claim them and place ourselves in the position to receive them as directed through the Word of God. "Ask and receive, that your joy may be full." And your joy can no man take from you, so long as you abide in Him who is our life, our joy, our rest, our hope.

"Why should the children of the King
Go mourning all the day?"
"Children of the Heavenly King,
As we journey let us sing!"

The Right Motive.

When Andrew Fuller went into his native town to collect for missions, he was accosted by an old acquaintance. who said, "Well, Andrew, I'll give you five pounds, seeing it is you."

"No," said Mr. Fuller, "I cannot take anything for the cause, seeing it is me."

He handed the money back to his friend.

The man saw the point, and said, "Andrew you are right; here are ten pounds, seeing it is for Jesus Christ."

It is not the amount that we give towards helping on the Lord's work—it is the motive that He looks at.—
"Sunday Circle."

Let us plant and rear all tender thoughts, knowing surely that those who sow in tears shall reap in joy.—
Hare.

St. Paul's Valuable Counsel

"The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all, apt to teach, patient, in meekness, instructing those that oppose themselves."-2 Tim. 2:24, 25.

THE Apostle is here addressing his much loved I fellow disciple, Timothy, and after exhorting him to continue in the faith and to hold fast the form of sound words, guarding well that which was intrusted to his care, he goes on to counsel son Timothy as to what are the requisites of an overseer in the Church and the responsibilities attached thereto.

The context shows the Apostle relating the sad position of some of the brethren, inasmuch as they had become led away from the pure teachings and had allowed themselves to be mixed up in erroneous doctrines through their carnality and neglect to keep the body under and bring same into subjection. This class is referred to by the Apostle in our text as opposing themselves, and who concerning the Truth had erred.

Well should all Christians, and especially those having the oversight in an Ecclesia, mark well and appreciate the importance of the above words if they would seek to have Divine approval. First of all, strife, argument, or contention, only savour of the fleshly mind and lead to confusion and every evil work, and is the outcome of a wrong condition of heart.—"Let all strife and bitterness and anger be put away from you, with all malice, and be kind one toward another," says the Apostle. Furthermore, in endeavouring to so demonstrate this Christlikeness, all can see the necessity of gentleness in dealing with the shortcomings of others and the patience that is ever required if we would be used as a blessing to such in saving them from the error of their way.

Regarding Timothy and his responsibility as an overseer, the Apostle Paul well knew the necessity and importance of exercising patient, gentle reproof along right lines. Not only should Timothy be able to teach and instruct through the medium of the infallible Word of God and know the Scriptures which are profitable for doctrine, but also in order to be an able teacher of the Word there must be associated the manifestation of its spirit with faith and power: In so doing, the Apostle reminds Timothy of the great necessity of exercising the quality of meekness in order that he might be guided in judgment at all times, and under every circumstance, in the Church.

No doubt, the Apostle Paul had learned in his experiences how necessary were the qualities of gentleness, patience and meekness, without which no servant of the Lord could possibly be used of God as a blessing, especially to those of the brethren who had gotten away from the teachings as suggested in the words of our text.

“Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer.”—Rom. 12:11, 12.

These verses contain some very necessary exhortations embodying many important features which should characterise the daily life of the Christian.

The first few words call to mind the statement in Prov. 18:9 that, “He that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster.” Here, too, it is necessary that we should exercise the spirit of a sound mind. We are to be neither neglectful of our duties, nor should we go to the other extreme and allow our temporal affairs to take up an undue proportion of our time.

Then, again, another phase of the subject is brought to our attention in Heb. 6:11, 12. We realise that since we have consecrated our all to the Lord our chief interest is in the Lord’s service, and it is for us to live up to our privileges and responsibilities in this respect.

We are to be “fervent in spirit.” As we are told in Rev. 3:15, the Lord would have us either hot or cold, but He finds no pleasure in those who are satisfied to remain in a lukewarm condition. We, too, with our Lord, should be able to say, “The zeal of thine house hath consumed me.” (John 2:17.)

Our service to the Lord should be willingly and joyfully rendered. We should “rejoice evermore” on account of the knowledge that we have of God’s plan and wonderful hope set before us. We are told in Hebrews that “no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous,” yet when we understand our place in God’s great plan we can be “patient in tribulation,” and so be rightly exercised by it. (1 Pet. 1:7-9; Rom. 5:1-5).

In order to be faithful and fully appreciative of the Lord’s goodness, it is necessary that we should obey the final injunction in verse 12. “Be instant in prayer,” or as in I Thess. 5:17, “Pray without ceasing”; see also Eph. 6:18.

FRANK & ERNEST TALKS

Geelong, 3GL, 222 M. Sundays 10 a.m.

Sydney, 2KY, 294 M. ,, 8.15 a.m.

Brisbane, 4KQ, 435 M. ,, 9 a.m.

Perth, 6KY, 227 M. ,, 4.45 p.m.

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